

Health Advisory: Update on Ebola Virus Preparedness for King County Healthcare Providers, 17 NOV 2014

Action requested:

- All healthcare providers should be familiar with current guidance for screening and management of potential Ebola virus disease (EVD) cases in their practice settings.
- All healthcare facilities should have a plan to evaluate and safely isolate a potential EVD case until the patient can be moved to an “Ebola-ready” facility if necessary in consultation with Public Health.
- Updated, specific guidance for management of EVD cases has been released by CDC for ambulatory care, emergency department and hospital settings (new since our last Health Advisory, see links below).
- **The KEY first step is taking a precise HISTORY for TRAVEL to an Ebola-affected area or contact with an Ebola patient in the past 21 days.** Patients *without* such history should be treated as usual.
 - On NOV 16th, CDC added **Mali** to the list of Ebola-affected nations for which enhanced screening and monitoring measures will be taken (<http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p1116-travelers-from-mali.html>).
 - **Contact Public Health for any traveler who has been in an Ebola-affected area, including Mali, in the past 21 days, irrespective of symptoms, before making a disposition.**
 - Patients with a history of travel to an Ebola-affected area or contact with an EVD patient in the past 21 days should be screened for SYMPTOMS. If positive, patients should be immediately isolated and appropriate infection control guidance taken, including use of PPE.
- **Ambulatory care settings** are not expected to evaluate persons with known or suspected EVD risk factors on site. Such persons should be screened before presenting at the facility when possible (E.g., when calling for appointment). If positive for EVD travel or exposure risk factors in the past 21 days, ambulatory care facilities should:
 - Ascertain if the patient is symptomatic, AND obtain complete contact information (more than one contact number when possible) for the patient. Call Public Health with this information immediately AND instruct the patient to also call Public Health immediately at 206-296-4774 and ask for the Ebola investigator.
 - If persons with EVD risk factors AND symptoms present to an ambulatory care facility, follow guidance referenced below for management of EVD in ambulatory care settings.
- Travelers being monitored for EVD symptoms by Public Health will be triaged to “Ebola-ready” facilities by Public Health and are instructed not to seek care at ambulatory care facilities.

Background

Ebola transmission in West Africa remains intense and continues to spread. The potential for imported cases of EVD will persist for the foreseeable future. Healthcare providers and healthcare facilities should assure ongoing, sustainable systems are in place to allow early recognition and safe management of potential EVD cases and awareness of current guidance as it is revised.

In healthcare settings, Ebola is spread through direct contact (e.g., through broken skin or through mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, or mouth) with blood or body fluids of a person who is sick with Ebola or with objects (e.g., needles, syringes) that have been contaminated with the virus. The risk is greatest from persons with uncontrolled diarrhea and vomiting or bleeding. “Dry” patients present a lower risk for transmission.

Healthcare providers and facilities should check the CDC website regularly to obtain the latest guidance regarding EVD risk areas and patient management.

EVD resources for healthcare providers and healthcare facilities

- Main CDC Ebola page with links to all guidance including a “What’s New” link: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>
- EVD information for healthcare workers with information for ambulatory care and emergency departments, infection control guidance, and algorithms for evaluation of travelers: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/index.html>
- Fact sheet for West Africans living in the US: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/information-for-west-africans-in-us.pdf>
- Ebola affected areas: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/distribution-map.html#areas>